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Abstract of the paper of the International Organization of Space Communications

1. The International Organization of Space Communications (INTERSPUTNIK) is an international intergovernmental organization founded in 1971 in order to establish and develop an international satellite system for the benefit of its member countries and other users. Presently, INTERSPUTNIK comprises 23 States that are Member States of the United Nations. More than 100 public and private companies are among the Organization's customers. Despite the serious consequences of the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the elimination of the institutional forms of cooperation between the former socialist community of countries, INTERSPUTNIK continues its development, steadily expanding its sphere of activity.

2. The transition of the Organization to commercial operation of its satellite system and its active entry into the world telecommunications market resulted in drastic changes in the legal basis of its activity. In the period from 1992 to 1996, new regulatory documents, namely, the Protocol on Amendments to the Agreement on the Establishment of the INTERSPUTNIK International System and Organization of Space Communications of 15 November 1971 and the Operating Agreement of INTERSPUTNIK, have been drawn up with the intention of restructuring the Organization fundamentally.

3. Global changes in geopolitics at the beginning of the 1990s and the very rapid development of the telecommunications market—the introduction of new services, deregulation, emergence of new operators and, as a result, keener competition—forced INTERSPUTNIK to reconsider its activity in order to adapt to the dynamically developing environment. Given those circumstances, INTERSPUTNIK chose a new development strategy based on long-term strategic alliances with both satellite communications operators and manufacturers of satellites, launch vehicles and ground equipment. The relevant decision was adopted by the INTERSPUTNIK Board in 1993 and resulted in an agreement on strategic partnership with the Lockheed Martin Corporation, one of the major manufacturers of satellite systems. The establishment of the Lockheed Martin INTERSPUTNIK (LMI) joint venture became a unique experiment in cooperation between an intergovernmental organization and a transnational corporation. The purpose of establishing the joint venture was implementation of a satellite communications project, covering the whole technological cycle of satellite communications services from manufacture and launch of satellites to their long-term in-orbit operation. The project provides for the launch of four state-of-the-art communications satellites, which will support the global communications network of the LMI system. The first LMI-series satellite will be launched by a Proton launch vehicle to 75° E in the second half of 1999.

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4. Besides LMI-series satellites, INTERSPUTNIK will use upgraded Russian Express satellites (of joint Russian-French manufacture), new SESAT satellites of the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, as well as other satellites on the basis of possible further alliances.

5. At the beginning of the third millennium, one of the priority trends in INTERSPUTNIK's development will be the operation of the new LMI-Ka series satellites utilizing the Ka band (20/30 GHz) and with on-board switching and processing of signals and inter-satellite retransmission.

6. The new generation of satellites that will operate as part of the global INTERSPUTNIK system meet the latest and prospective world requirements and have much better characteristics than the spacecraft that INTERSPUTNIK used earlier. The new INTERSPUTNIK satellite fleet will provide for digital television channels, videoconferencing, cellular television broadcasting, interactive services, multimedia, high-bit rate access to the Internet, expansion of very small aperture terminal (VSAT) Earth station networks, tele-medicine and tele-education, banking services and reliable communications on a global basis.

7. The rejuvenated INTERSPUTNIK space segment, together with the upgraded ground facilities, paves the way for the latest telecommunications technologies.